

This I Believe Patchwork 3

“Same, but different.” We’re all the same; we’re all human beings. And yet, everyone is different. We’re all individually unique, being born with different skin, hair and eye colours, and we all have different ways of thinking and doing things. The sad thing is, most people in the world seem unwilling to accept this difference. I was ten when I first read about how Hitler caused the death of millions of Jews. Even at that time, I felt it was ridiculous of Hitler to kill and torture others just because he couldn’t accept them. Besides, who gave him the right to decide that he was more superior than them anyway?

You might be wondering why I worry about this issue of discrimination, when we don’t see it around us. But the truth is, I do see it once in a while, right here in Singapore.

There was once when I was taking the train, I noticed an Indian man entering the carriage. He then proceeded to sit next to a Chinese woman in the seat across me. The woman immediately cringed and tried to increase the distance between them by squeezing herself as far away from him as possible. As if that wasn’t bad enough, the woman then held her nose with her fingers and ‘tsk’-ed several times. After a while, I think that the man became fed up. But instead of telling the woman off, he simply stood up and decided to stand instead. Immediately, the woman started to relax.

After witnessing this, I only felt anger towards the woman. She blatantly showed her displeasure towards the man without sparing a thought about his feelings. Has she no shame? What right did she have to be upset, when the man never did anything to her? I remember that as a child, my parents and teachers would tell me to treat others with respect, and that we should accept the different cultures and practices that others may have. If even a child knows that we should treat others equally, why is it that adults seem to ignore this teaching?

I feel that it is important to accept difference, because everyone has a right to be who they want to be. Just because someone has a different coloured skin, or behaves in a different way, it doesn't make them inferior. I once had a classmate who was often made fun of by my other classmates, because they felt that her behavior was 'weird'. Despite the teasing, she still tried her best to make friends, and after more than a year, my classmates finally realized that she is actually a very nice person. My classmates didn't accept her at first, but in the end, they realized that she is no different from them inside. Is any person really any different from another? After all, we're all the same; we're all human beings.

Accepting difference; this I believe.